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Community E-lert®

DATE: September 15, 2005
TO: Community E-lert Recipients
FROM: Jeffrey Chen, Chief of Police
SUBJECT: Community E-lert #05-037

Community E-lert® is a registered trademark of the City of Medina Police Department. This announcement is provided as a public service to residents of Medina and Hunts Point. It is our intention to distribute these E-lerts following an occurrence or condition that may have public safety or community well-being implications. E-lerts are also available via fax for those residents without access to email.

CREDIT CARD SCAM

The following information has been issued by the Idaho Credit Union League:

WARNING...New Credit Card Scam.

Note, the callers do not ask for your card number; they already have it. This information is worth reading. By understanding how the VISA & MasterCard Telephone Credit Card Scam works, you'll be better prepared to protect yourself.

One of our employees was called on Wednesday from "VISA", and I was called on Thursday from "MasterCard".

The scam works like this:

Person calling says, "This is (name), and I'm calling from the Security and Fraud Department at VISA. My Badge number is 12460 Your card has been flagged for an unusual purchase pattern, and I'm calling to verify. This would be on your VISA card which was issued by (name of bank). Did you purchase an Anti-Telemarketing Device for \$497.99 from a Marketing company based in Arizona?" When you say "No", the caller continues with, "Then we will be issuing a credit to your account. This is a company we have been watching and the charges range from \$297 to \$497, just under the \$500 purchase pattern that flags most cards. Before your next statement, the credit will be sent to (gives you your address), is that correct?" You say "yes". The caller continues - "I will be starting a Fraud investigation. If you have any questions, you should call the 1-800 number listed on the back of your card (1-800-VISA) and ask for Security. You will need

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to refer to this Control Number. The caller then gives you a 6 digit number. "Do you need me to read it again?"

Here's the IMPORTANT part on how the scam works. The caller then says, "I need to verify you are in possession of your card". He'll ask you to "turn your card over and look for some numbers". There are 7 numbers; the first 4 are part of your card number, the next 3 are the security Numbers' that verify you are the possessor of the card. These are the numbers you sometimes use to make Internet purchases to prove you have the card. The caller will ask you to read the 3 numbers to him. After you tell the caller the 3 numbers, he'll say, "That is correct, I just needed to verify that the card has not been lost or stolen, and that you still have your card. Do you have any other questions?" After you say No, the caller then thanks you and states, "Don't hesitate to call back if you do", and hangs up.

You actually say very little, and they never ask for or tell you the Card number. But after we were called on Wednesday, we called back within 20 minutes to ask a question. Are we glad we did! The real VISA Security Department told us it was a scam and in the last 15 minutes a new purchase of \$497.99 was charged to our card.

Long story made short – we made a real fraud report and closed the VISA account. VISA is reissuing us a new number. What the scammers want is the 3-digit PIN number on the back of the card. Don't give it to them. Instead, tell them you'll call VISA or Master card directly for verification of their conversation. The real VISA told us that they will never ask for anything on the card as they already know the information since they issued the card! If you give the scammers your 3 Digit PIN Number, you think you're receiving a credit. However, by the time you get your statement you'll see Charges for purchases you didn't make, and by then it's almost to late and/or more difficult to actually file a fraud report. What makes this more remarkable is that on Thursday, I got a call from a "Jason Richardson of MasterCard" with a word-for-word repeat of the VISA scam. This time I didn't let him finish. I hung up! We filed a police report, as instructed by VISA. The police said they are taking several of these reports daily!

REMINDER

Please encourage your friends and neighbors to register with the Medina Police Department Community E-lert Program. Registration is available online at www.medina-wa.gov. Simply select 'Police Department', then choose 'E-lert Program' and click 'sign up'.

If you wish to speak or make a comment about this information, please call 425-233-6420 or email Chief Chen at jchen@medina-wa.gov.